

HOME FOR EVERY AMERICAN

GOVERNOR AWARD: Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr.

Gubernatorial leadership, state investment, regional partnership, a single and uniform data source, adoption of innovations including Housing First, increased access to mainstream benefits – these are the ingredients of Utah’s results in ending chronic homelessness under the leadership of Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr.

A redesigned Utah Homeless Coordinating Committee, with members appointed by the Governor and led by the Lieutenant Governor, now includes key policy decision-makers and is implementing the Utah 10-Year Business Plan to End Chronic Homelessness completed in 2005. The Plan called for a strategic network of local elected officials to create 12 Local Homeless Coordinating Committees covering the entire state with the intention that each of the Local Coordinating Committees would create a 10-Year Plan to work in concert with the state-level effort and develop a pilot Housing First program in their area. The first pilot, called the “Housing First – Pathways Project,” began in Salt Lake City with the placement of 17 chronically homeless individuals in existing housing inventory using the Housing First model with supportive services. The initiative has since demonstrated a 45% reduction in service system costs for the 17 individuals participating in the program. Utah developed a single HMIS system for all federal and state homeless programs and adopted measures that reduced SSI/SSDI application processing time from 12 month to 3 months.

New housing initiatives include the \$12 million Sunrise Apartments, a 100-unit permanent supportive housing initiative developed by Housing Assistance Management Enterprise (HAME), a non-profit subsidiary of the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City. Construction was funded by a combination of tax credits, HUD and VA resources, Olene Walker Housing Trust Fund monies, local funding from the county and the Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City, and more than \$1.1 million in private investment. Grace Mary Manor opened in March 2008 with 84 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals. An additional 298 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and families are either under construction or approved. The state also draws on the Pamela Atkinson Homeless Trust Fund funded by the Legislature and contributions.